

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Gender has been a remarkable topic for linguists. Inequality between the two gender categories has been debated for so long. Gender, as one of human's identity is the earliest identity that infants learn to put in both to themselves and other people. Gender is not a biological matter. Instead, it is socially constructed (Vogl and Baur 2018). We learn how to address and being addressed as female or male, boy or girl, daughter or son, brother or sister, and so on since birth. Gender equality means both women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and for contributing to, and benefiting from, economic, social, cultural, and political development (UNESCO 2003).

Regarding the phenomenon of gender inequality, feminists around the world are trying to achieve the equality between the two gender categories. Xia (2013) argues that the changes in the language can show the improvement in women's social status. Marked in the 1970s, a notion of lexicon changes has happened initiated by American second-wave feminists (Kramer 2016). Some of the most salient progress are an invention and spreading of "Ms.", the promotion of gender-neutral vocalization terminology such as "flight attendant" and "postal worker", and also the term "sexual harassment" that became a problematic category of behavior rather than a diffuse set of playful practices (Kramer 2016).

A decade later, during the 1980s and 1990s, feminist scholarship in the USA and Europe took an increasingly linguistic turn, arguing that language, specifically discourse, shapes gender identities and supports male as well as heterosexual privilege (Koupal, Kouhi and Aslrasouli 2014). Moreover, Pauwels (cited in Liddicoat 2011) identifies three main projects to address sexist nature of language involving disruption (e.g. the use of “herstory” for “history”), development of a women-centred form of language, and intervention in language. In this projects, gender neutral terms such as “fire fighter” and “police officer” have evolved over time.

On top of that, recently women’s march has assembled more and more activists, involving both men and women. Andone and Wagner (2019) claim that the Women’s March on Washington that happened on January 2017 was the largest single-day demonstration in recorded U.S. history. The movement was then followed by a gigantic women march which was held across US cities such as Washington D.C., New York City, Boston, Chicago, Denver, and Los Angeles in the early 2019 (Andone and Wagner 2019). They were asking for gender equality and women’s freedom in expressing themselves.

After acknowledging that the effort in achieving gender equality has been happening since long ago, especially in dealing with language, however, gender equality has become a never ending discussion to date. Mills and Mullany (2011) states that gender equalities still have not been achieved, either in developing countries or in the western countries where feminism and women’s movements have longer history. In some patriarchal societies, women are likely to be

subordinated (Sultana 2011). Related to this problem, international organizations are continuously put effort to eliminate the inequality between the two gender categories.

One of the organizations under the auspices of the United Nations concerning on women is UN Women. It is dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women (UN Women n.d.). Written down on the website www.unwomen.org, UN Women has declared that it is a global champion for women and girls on accelerating progress to meet their needs worldwide. UN Women committed to set laws, policies, programs and services that are necessary in order to achieve gender equality globally. In June 2015, UN Women initially published a magazine called *Transform*. The magazine is claimed to be the first exclusive magazine dedicated to gender-responsive evaluation.

Regarding claims arguing about the importance of language as the crucial front in the battle of gender equality, the discussion on how UN Women use language in relation with women to meet gender equality is interesting. Along with Kramer (2016) who states that language change may be a necessary component of social change, Liddicoat (2011) argues that language represents and reproduces gender by the way it positions both males and females and the way it enters into social practices that address people, their activities, as well as their ideas based on gender.

There are many elements of language that can help us to reveal how UN Women empower women in their magazine in order to promote gender equality through the use of written language. One of the ways is through analyzing the

choice of words related to women in the magazine. Del-Teso-Craviotto (2006) states that lexical choice both spoken and written is important in creating a particular assumption on women. She argues that certain words such as “woman”, “man”, or “work” are used to reveal the magazine’s position towards women and femininity.

Other scholars conducted study that explores lexical items related to gender in a grammar book. Afiz and Kwary (2015) mention that there is an effort of the author in trying to show gender equity by associating men more with nouns related to family members and women with more active verbs. Tenorio (2000) and Gunawan (2017) proof that there are still gender stereotyping in the dictionary that positions women in the secondary role. In addition, Arvidson (2009) and Ratnasari (2017) claim that words that carry connotations are used more in the magazines addressing women, and that in political context more male words are still used even in a female magazine.

Studies in the area of language and gender has been broaden along with the miscellaneous medias that are used as the source of research. Many linguists have studied how language affects gender and vice versa in different kinds of written media. Nonetheless, studies on language and gender that explore lexical items related to women in the magazine which dedicates to gender-responsiveness is undertaken. Therefore, a study on this particular topic is needed to be conducted.

The main purpose of this study is to explore words that are related to women in *Transform* magazine and see how UN Women use language in achieving their goal to meet gender equality. This study will focus only on context

words, particularly nouns and verbs. Miller (2002) mentions that nouns and verbs are fundamental to disclose the hinted meaning of a text since nouns are required in referring to entities and verbs are required in predicating properties of them. Since the object, *Transform* magazine, is in regard to gender equality, it may contain specific vocabularies related to women, especially nouns and verbs, to strengthen the role of women in society.

The data used in this study is the whole text of the two editions of *Transform* i.e. Issue 3 (total words: 9634 as tokens/1540 as types) and Issue 15 (total words: 11100 as tokens/1719 as types) excluding the covers, editorial foreword, footnotes, posters, photos' captions, as well as headers and footers using AntConc. The writer intended to draw comparison between Issue 3 (The Normative Support Work Issue) which was published in 2015 and Issue 15 (The Governance and National Planning Issue) which was published in 2019 in order to see whether or not there are any significant developments regarding the use of nouns and verbs related to women before and after the two women's marches.

The relevant nouns and verbs were then categorized based on their semantic categories using English Semantic Tagger provided by UCREL Semantic Analysis System (USAS). The tagset used in USAS' English Semantic Tagger is developed based on McArthur's Longman Lexicon of Contemporary English (LLOCE) (1981, cited in Rayson, Archer, et al. 2004). This analysis is to help the writer interpreting the data in a way to provide illustrations on how UN Women use language in relation with women to achieve gender equality.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

Based on the background of the study, the writer formulates two research questions as follows:

1. What are the most frequent nouns and verbs related to women in *Transform* magazine Issue 3 and 15?
2. What are the similarities and differences between the related words for women in *Transform* magazine Issue 3 and 15?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the statement of the problem, this study attempts to explore nouns and verbs related to women in *Transform* magazine Issue 3 and 15 by achieving these following objectives:

1. Finding the most frequent nouns and verbs related to women in *Transform* magazine Issue 3 and 15.
2. Examining the similarities and differences between the related words for women in *Transform* magazine Issue 3 and 15.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Theoretically, this study is conducted primarily on the purpose of contributing to the expansion of semantics, especially on how particular words are related to a particular gender category and implementing the method of corpus linguistics. This study may also give additional knowledge to the area study of language and gender on how UN Women use language in relation with women in their magazine. Practically, the result that will be revealed in this study is expected to be useful for scholars who are interested in the study of lexical items

that are related to women in order to conduct further researches on the similar field. In addition, this study is expected to be able to compliment the lack of previous studies and contribute positively to the upcoming researches, especially the English Department students of Universitas Airlangga.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

Gender responsiveness : “Gender responsiveness is building an environment which ensures equality of treatment for all gender categories” (Bloom and Covington 2001, 7)

Magazine : “A periodical publication containing articles and illustrations, often on a particular subject or aimed at a particular readership” (LEXICO n.d.)

UN Women : “UN Women is the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women” (UN Women n.d.)

Noun : “A word (other than a pronoun) used to identify any of a class of people, places, or things (common noun), or to name a particular one of these (proper noun)” (LEXICO n.d.)

Verb : “A word used to describe an action, state, or occurrence, and forming the main part of the predicate of a sentence, such as hear, become, happen.” (LEXICO n.d.)